

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me extend my warmest greetings to all the participants of this second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in Nairobi.

Currently, the **United Nations** is leading some crucial global undertakings:

- Understanding the root causes of the most complex crisis of the last 75 years we are facing.
- Implementing an ambitious sustainable development agenda, and
- Protecting the planet from the scourge of climate change.

UN Habitat plays a vital role in all these endeavours.

Cities are at the epicenter of the converging crises we currently face.

From migration to climate change and conflicts, the cumulative effects of these phenomena are magnified in urban areas, in particular in developing countries.

So, how can we make our cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable?

First, we need comprehensive data and statistics collection and dissemination.

Second, governments must monitor the spatial distribution of future populations to assess risks associated with climate change, such as flooding, heat waves, epidemics, food security, and freshwater availability.

But what we urgently need is a *mindset shift*. From a business-as-usual planning and operation to one aiming at real sustainability transformation.

This means strengthening the **science-policy interface**, advancing evidence-based solutions, and approaching our goals holistically.

In your discussions this week, I invite you to explore how we can ensure that our approach to sustainability transformation better reflects the role of cities in our world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The lagging in **SDG implementation** is a universal problem.

However, it is the people living in the developing countries, including those in special situations, who often bear the brunt of the crises we face.

We urgently need political will, commitment, solidarity, financing, and action.

The **COVID-19** pandemic has shown us that we are capable of implementing massive, radical, and transformative action when humanity is under threat.

We must build on this momentum and mobilize political commitments and breakthroughs.

Ahead of the **SDG Summit**, I invite you to review the lessons learned from the national voluntary reviews, unlock new commitments, and adopt innovative policies based on scientific inputs.

The SDG Summit in September will be an opportunity to commit to the implementation of bold and game-changing solutions, including in urban areas.

Understanding the interdependence of the global goals is crucial in unlocking their full potential, optimizing resources, and achieving successful outcomes.

I am confident that this second session of the UN Habitat Assembly will yield fruitful outcomes.

I eagerly await the results.

Thank you.